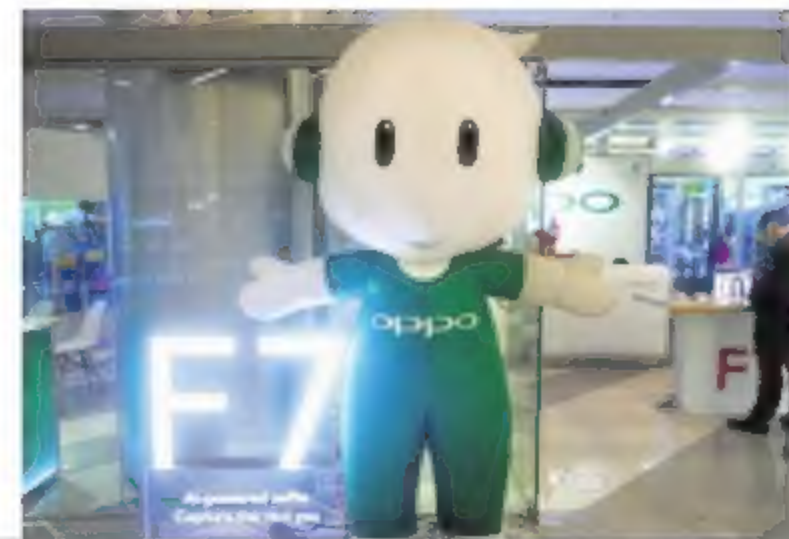




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I-T dept raids Chinese smartphone makers

The Income Tax department conducted search and seizure operations on Chinese smartphone maker Oppo and their Chinese vendors, OnePlus and Xiaomi at several locations across the country including Bengaluru on Wednesday for alleged tax violations. The raids were also reportedly conducted at several locations of third-party manufacturers such as Rising Star India and Dixon. **P11**

GENOME SEQUENCING OF ALL +VE CASES IN 8 CITIES

SUMI SUKANYA DUTTA @ New Delhi

SUSPECTING Omicron community transmission in eight cities in seven states, the Central Government has decided to conduct whole genome sequencing of Covid-positive RT-PCR samples from Mumbai, Pune, Delhi, Bengaluru, Chennai, Hyderabad, Bhubaneswar and Kolkata.

"One of the key epidemiological indices to be ascertained at this stage is the presence of Omicron transmission in the community in larger cities," said Sujit Kumar Singh, head of the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), in a letter written to the seven state governments on Wednesday.

Citing a meeting with state surveillance officers of these states last week, Singh said the eight cities were identified for monitoring community transmission.

"Accordingly, it was decided in consultations with the INSA-COG genome sequencing laboratories (IGSLs) that all RT-PCR positive samples from these cities will be sent for whole genome sequencing at the designated IGSLs," said the letter, accessed by this newspaper.

An official from the NCDC ex-



Four of family test positive for Omicron in B'luru

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

WITH a Covid-19 cluster of four new cases of the Omicron variant emerging in Bengaluru, the state's tally with the new variant has risen to 23 on Wednesday.

The new cluster has been detected at the Raheja Residency apartment complex in Koramangala, Bengaluru. The spread began with a

26-year-old woman, who returned from the UK recently, testing positive for Covid-19. Health officials said she had tested negative at the airport but developed

symptoms later on, due to which she got herself tested again and was found to be positive. Her samples were taken and sent for genome sequencing.

Her family members too developed symptoms in the intervening period and were tested as primary contacts. All their samples too were sent for genome sequencing. The family of four, apart from the 26-year-old woman, includes her 50-year-old mother, 56-year-old father and 20-year-old sister.

CONTINUED ON P3

Rawat's turn to grumble against party leadership

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Dehradun/New Delhi

FROM being the Congress high command's pointsperson for the botched organisational reset in Punjab, Harish Rawat is now getting a feel of the other end of the stick. That experience is depressing enough for him to bitterly tweet about the constraints, adding he felt like quitting multiple times.

Months ago, the Congress leadership had deployed him to instal Navjot Singh Sidhu as Punjab Congress unit chief and unseat Amarinder Singh chief minister. Reverberations

of the messy shake up are still being felt in Punjab.

While Rawat's outburst was directed at the Congress in-charge for Uttarakhand Devendra Yadav, within the high command it was viewed as a pressure tactic as the party is in the process of finalising candidates for the upcoming Assembly polls.

The wily former chief minister of Uttarakhand complained that the party organisation was hindering instead of helping him. "It is strange how I have to

swim in the ocean of election. Instead of reaching out for help,

the organisational structure is either ignoring me or playing a negative role. The leadership has left several crocodiles in the ocean where I have to swim," he tweeted.

"The representatives of those on whose orders I have to swim are tying up my hands and feet. On several occasions, it comes to my mind that I have swum enough and it is time to rest. Then another voice rises, asking me to never be helpless and never run away. I am in a dilemma. May the new year show

me my path. I am sure Bhagwan Kedarnath will," he said.

Surinder Aggarwal, advisor to Harish Rawat, hinted at growing differences between Rawat and Yadav. "He (Rawat) is a senior leader of Congress. If his posters are removed from Rahul Gandhi's rally in the presence of Devendra Yadav, then his role comes into doubt. There's a probability that Devendra Yadav is involved in the conspiracy," Aggarwal alleged.

Rawat is leaving no stone unturned to put his name forward as the CM candidate of the party in the hill state.

Kannada groups call for state bandh on Dec 31

ENS @ Bengaluru

WITH continuing tension in the border areas, pro-Kannada organisations in the state have called for Karnataka bandh on December 31 demanding a ban on the Maharashtra Ekikaran Samiti (MES).

After holding a meeting with representatives of several pro-Kannada organisations in Bengaluru on Wednesday, Kananda activist Vatal Nagaraj announced that they will withdraw the bandh call only if the government bans the MES by December 29.

"We have taken it very seriously and it will be a complete bandh from 6 am to 6 pm. However, essential services

will not be affected," Nagaraj stressed. People from across the state will support the bandh to protest against the burning of Kannada flags, vandalising statues and damaging Karnataka vehicles in Maharashtra, he said.

The pro-Kannada organisations are planning to take out a massive rally from Town Hall to Freedom Park in Bengaluru on December 31 to send out a strong message to the government. Leader of a pro-Kannada organisation and film producer Sa Ra Govindu said they will convince all associations, including hotel and petrol bunk owners, advocates' associations and others to support the bandh. **P4**

Women commandos of CRPF to protect Shah, Sonia

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi



THE first batch of 32 Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) women commandos will soon be deployed for the protection of Home Minister Amit Shah, Congress leaders Sonia Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, and other Z-plus protectees such as former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and his wife Gursharan Kaur.

The women commandos will be deployed for multiple duties, which could include accompanying the VIP politicians during their campaigning for the upcoming Assembly polls in five states, sources said. **CONTINUED ON P9**

EXPRESS READ

Telecom firms question award of IAF tender to ITI

Private telecom equipment manufacturers in India have registered strong protest, not only with the IAF, but also with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. They have questioned the award of tender to ITI Ltd, a PSU, for upgrading IAF's dedicated cellular network. **P9**



आशाओं की मिली उड़ान बढ़ रहा प्रदेश का सम्मान



देश में सबसे अधिक
पांच इंटरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट
वाला राज्य बनेगा उत्तर प्रदेश

सोच ईमानदार, काम दमदार

